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HOW WELL ARE THEY PAID.

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND, NEW YORK, N.Y.

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DESCRIPTORS- *SALARIES, *BLIND, *PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL,
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ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL, OCCUPATIONAL SURVEYS, NATIONAL
SURVEYS, AGENCIES,

A SURVEY OF SALARIES PAID IN 26 KEY OCCUPATIONS WORKING WITH THE BLIND WAS CONDUCTED BY THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS IN 1966 (VT 003 405). THIS PUBLICATION INTERPRETS THE MAJOR FINDINGS OF THAT STUDY. OF 11,000 PERSONS GIVING DIRECT SERVICE TO THE BLIND, ABOUT HALF WERE IN PROFESSIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS. ANNUAL SALARIES OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND WERE \$2,000 LESS THAN THOSE OF THE BLIND IN LOCAL DAY SCHOOLS AND \$170 LESS THAN THOSE OF FACTORY WORKERS. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS IN GOVERNMENT OR STATE AGENCIES WITH AN ANNUAL SALARY OF \$7,080 LED THOSE IN PRIVATE AGENCIES BY \$550. GENERAL STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICE COUNSELORS RECEIVED \$530 MORE PER YEAR THAN THEIR INSTATE AGENCIES. SOCIAL CASEWORKERS WITH MASTER'S DEGREE BARELY SURPASSED THE \$7,000 MINIMUM RECOMMENDED BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS FOR BEGINNING SOCIAL WORKERS WITH THIS DEGREE. THE AVERAGE INCOME OF REHABILITATION, OR HOME, TEACHERS WAS \$5,880, LOWEST OF SALARIED AGENCY WORKERS. CASEWORK SUPERVISORS AVERAGED \$8,110, ALSO LOWER THAN COUNTERPARTS WHO SUPERVISED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL CASEWORKERS. ADMINISTRATOR SALARIES WERE \$11,200 FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCY DIRECTORS, \$11,290 FOR SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS, AND \$8,700 FOR NONGOVERNMENT AGENCY DIRECTORS. GENERALLY, MEDIAN SALARIES OF WORKERS FOR THE BLIND WERE LITTLE MORE THAN BEGINNING SALARIES OFFERED IN THE BUSINESS WORLD. THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE FREE FROM THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND, 15 WEST 16TH STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10011. (JM)

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Introduction

"Workers for the Blind—How Well Are They Paid?" is based upon a salary survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The title of the original report is *Salaries for Selected Occupations in Services for the Blind, January 1966*, Bulletin No. 1500, published in November 1966. The report is for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. The price is 30 cents.

The study was supported, in part, by Research Grant Number 1898 from the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

This publication has been prepared to interpret the major findings of the survey. Those responsible for determining salaries of workers for the blind—legislators, government officials, agency and school trustees and directors, as well as local community personnel—are urged to review the salaries outlined here and use them as a springboard for establishing more realistic levels of compensation.

Additional copies of How Well Are They Paid? are available free of charge from the American Foundation for the Blind.

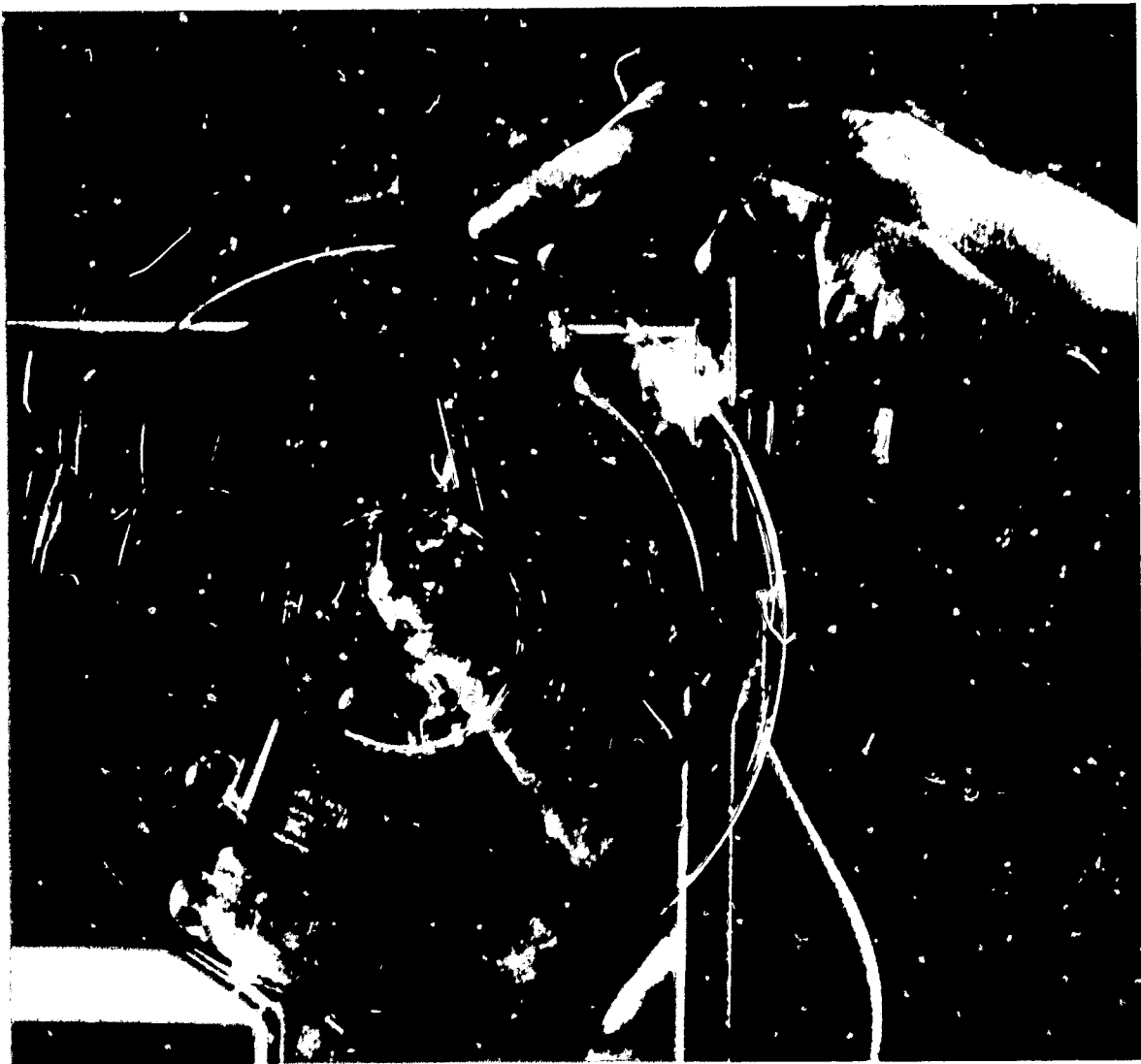
Extent of the Survey

*This report will present salary data for the largest categories of selected groups of workers for the blind (those involved in rehabilitation and general welfare services), as well as for elementary and secondary school teachers, and administrative workers in the field of services for the blind.**

Almost 11,000 people are engaged in direct service programs for blind people. Of this number, about half are employed in professional and administrative positions. In January 1966 the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, upon request of the American Foundation for the Blind, conducted a survey of salaries paid in 26 key occupations of work for the blind. The 1966 salary survey was the third initiated in the past decade by the American Foundation for the Blind in recognition of the need for authoritative salary data to assist in sound salary planning by local organizations serving the blind.

The 1966 survey was limited to those workers who spend at least half their time in direct service for the "legally blind."** About 80 percent of all full-time professional and administrative workers were represented in the 26 selected occupations. Government administered agencies, including local day-school systems, accounted for the majority, or four fifths of the workers.

**Unless specified otherwise, all salaries in this report are median annual rates — one half of the salaries reported are below this figure and one half above it.*



Teachers for the Blind— How Well are they Paid?

Education of blind children in the United States is conducted generally in two settings: the local community day school system (where nearly 60 percent of the children are), and in residential schools for the blind.

An elementary or secondary teacher employed to teach in a residential school receives an average salary of almost \$2,000 less per year than if he were to teach in a local day school. These figures exclude residential school teachers whose salaries are supplemented by maintenance support, for actually, most teachers are not compensated in this manner. (Three fourths of the teachers working in the residential schools surveyed received no maintenance payments at all.*)

In comparing wages of teachers in residential schools with those of workers in business and industry, residential schools lag behind. In 1939 teachers of the blind (both elementary and secondary) earned

**For the survey, full maintenance support was defined to "include employees receiving at least 2 meals a day and lodging." Partial maintenance included "employees receiving some maintenance but less than 2 meals a day and lodging."*

In vocational rehabilitation and general welfare agencies the largest categories of direct service workers for the blind were vocational rehabilitation counselors, rehabilitation teachers (often referred to as home teachers), orientation and mobility instructors and social caseworkers.

***For the purpose of the survey "legal blindness" was defined as "Central visual acuity which does not exceed 20/200 in the better eye with correcting lenses or central visual acuity greater than 20/200 but accompanied by a limitation in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees."*

Median Annual Salaries for Selected Occupations in All Agencies and Schools/January 1966*

Occupation (number of employees)	Median salaries		
Nursery school teachers (19)	\$5,200	Supervisors of business enterprises (119)	\$6,500
Kindergarten teachers (48)	5,500	Mobility instructors (120)	6,910
Elementary school teachers, grades 1-6 (908)	6,760	Rehabilitation teachers (265)	5,880
Secondary school teachers, grades 7-12 (481)	6,720	Superintendents of residential schools (40)	11,290
Supervising teachers (41)	7,750	Principals of residential schools (41)	9,420
Supervisors of Special Education (41)	9,600	Directors of agencies (commissions or bureaus) for the blind (150)	9,930
Music teachers (140)	6,200	Assistant directors of agencies (commissions or bureaus) for the blind (57)	9,600
Physical education teachers (83)	5,670	Supervisors of sheltered workshops (87)	7,200
Industrial arts teachers (109)	5,980	Directors of rehabilitation centers (27)	9,500
Home economics teachers (68)	5,760		
Teachers of arts and crafts (67)	5,150		
School guidance counselors (27)	6,960		
Casework supervisors (social) (73)	8,110		
Caseworkers (social) (238)	6,320		
Supervisors of vocational rehabilitation services (72)	8,480		
Vocational rehabilitation counselors (376)	7,080		
Placement specialists (42)	7,200		

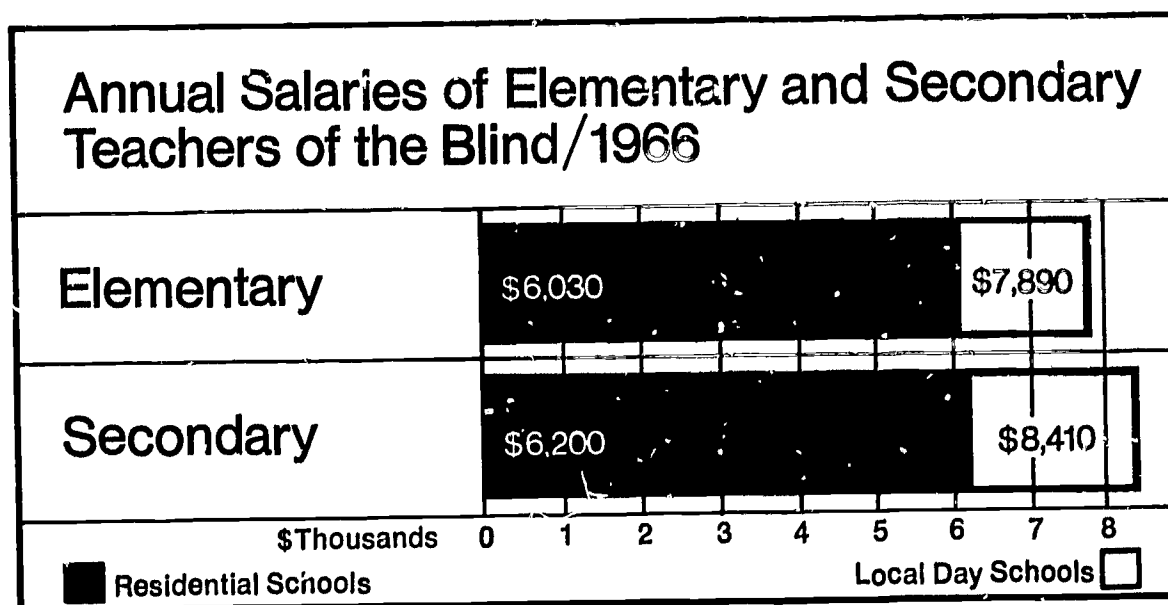
* Figures listed in this table are a combination of government and non-government agencies and will differ with tables listing specific agencies.

essentially the same salary as production workers.* Today, after more than twenty-five years the situation remains much the same.

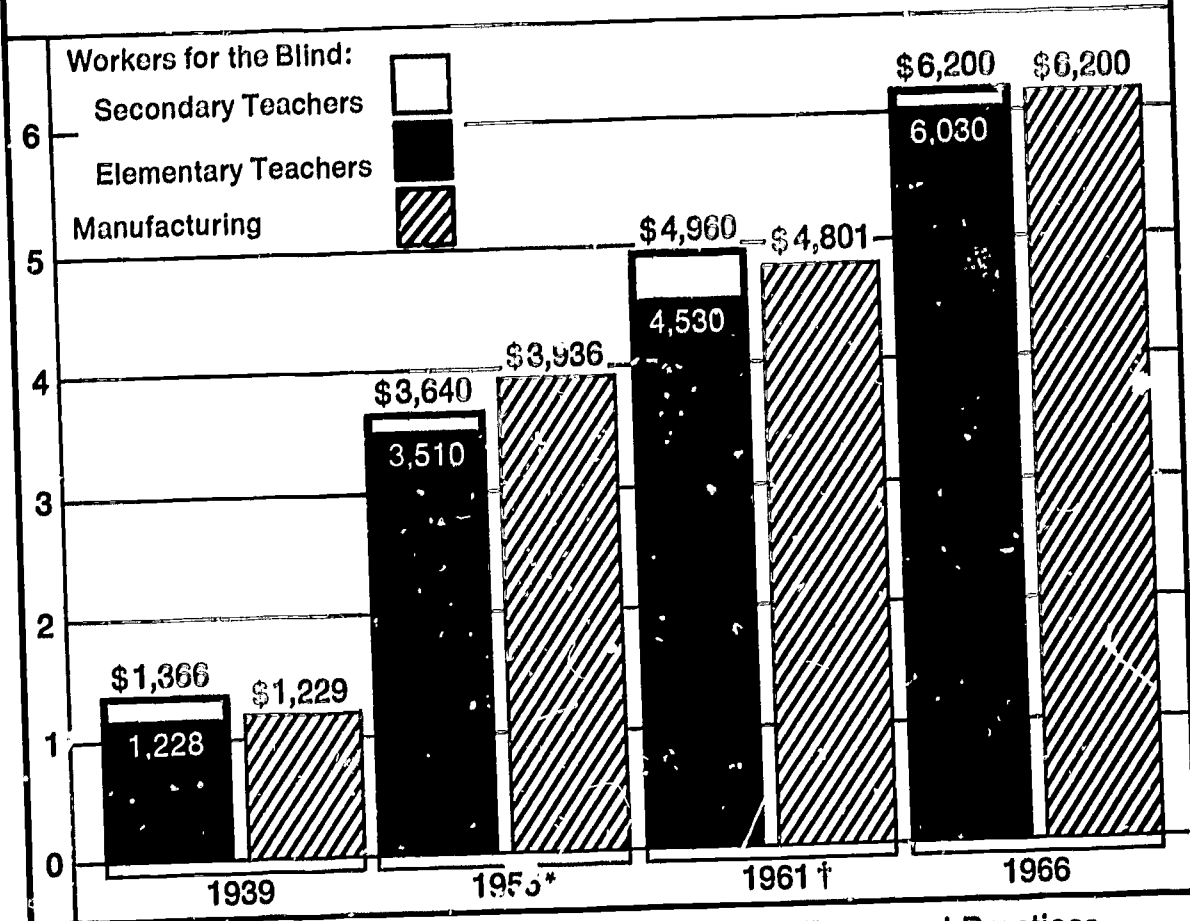
In December 1965 the annual salary of a factory worker was \$6,200,** the same as that earned by a secondary teacher of the blind, and \$170 more than that paid to an elementary teacher in a residential school.

*Lowenfeld, Berthold, Teachers of the Blind, their Status and Salaries, American Foundation for the Blind, New York, N.Y. 1941

**Summary of Manufacturing Earnings Series, 1929-65, U.S. Dept. of Labor Statistics (report #229, revised 1966). [Weekly salary rate (gross pay before overtime) as of December '65 converted to annual rate by AFB.]



Comparative Salaries of Residential School Teachers and Manufacturing Workers



*National Survey of Personnel Standards and Personnel Practices in Services for the Blind, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C., 1956

†Salaries for Selected Occupations in Services for the Blind, May, 1961, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C., 1962



Rehabilitation and General Welfare Services

The second largest category of professional workers represented in the survey includes vocational rehabilitation counselors, mobility instructors, social caseworkers, and rehabilitation teachers (home teachers). These practitioners daily provide the specialized, direct services essential to the rehabilitation and general welfare of the nation's blind citizens; yet they, like their colleagues in residential schools, are paid less than the teacher of blind children in local day schools.

According to the 1966 survey, the average salary for all vocational rehabilitation counselors is \$7,080. Government or state agencies for the blind set the salary pace, and private agencies trail far behind, paying an average of \$550 less per year.

But the story is incomplete if comparisons are limited to agencies serving only the blind; one must consider general state rehabilitation services as well. Statistics from another study show that counselors in those agencies definitely fare better than those in agencies for the blind. Studies conducted in 1966 for the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association show that the average counselor in a general state vocational rehabilitation service receives \$530 more per year than his counterpart in a state agency for the blind.*

**Porter, T. L. and Saxon, J. P., Rehabilitation Counselor, Qualifications, Salaries and Benefits (unpublished study), National Rehabilitation Counseling Association, Washington, D.C. 1966.*

Salaries for Selected Career Workers in Agencies for the Blind

Education (day schools)	Secondary	\$8,410
	Elementary	7,890
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor		7,080
Mobility Instructor		6,910
Social Caseworker		6,320
Rehabilitation Teacher		5,880

Social Workers

Salaries for social caseworkers have increased less over the past five years than for other workers for the blind in this practitioner group: 20 percent as compared to 28 percent generally for professional and administrative occupations surveyed by the BLS in 1961 and 1966. For those social workers who have earned a master's degree the median wage was \$7,060, an amount barely above the minimum salary of \$7,000 recommended in 1965 by the National Association of Social Workers for the beginning worker with a master's degree.*

*Salaries: Official NASW Policy, *National Association of Social Workers*, New York, September 1965.

Salaries for Supervisors of Rehabilitation and General Welfare Services	
Special Education	\$9,600
Vocational Rehabilitation Services	8,480
Social Caseworkers	8,110

Among those persons who have full time supervising responsibilities, those in the field of education lead the salary scale, followed by supervisors of vocational rehabilitation and social caseworkers. The 1966 average salary of a casework-supervisor was \$8,110; a 23 percent increase from the 1961 level of \$6,600. Despite this gain, workers in agencies for the blind are not paid nearly as well as their counterparts in other service agencies. For example, in 1966 the Family Service Association of America reported a median salary of \$9,395 paid to casework supervisors in local family service agencies — over \$1,000 more per year than a comparable supervisor in services for the blind earns.*

**Family Service Statistics, Part I, Summary of 1965, Family Service Association of America, New York, March 1966.*

Administrator's Salaries

Superintendents of Schools	\$11,290
Directors, Government Agencies for the Blind	11,200
Directors, Non-government Agencies for the Blind	8,700

As the chart illustrates, salaries of administrators of private or non-government agencies for the blind are far lower than those in government agencies.

Since 1961, each category of administrators has experienced salary increases: school superintendents 30 percent; government directors 32 percent; private agency directors 24 percent.



Salaries of Workers for the Blind Compared to Salaries of Other Professional Workers

Comparisons between vocations are difficult to make. No two professions are directly comparable; each has requirements and tasks unique to its field. But starting salaries are a good indication of what lies ahead for the new employee. To the men of the class of '66, business offered the highest beginning wages on record. As reported in the salary surveys conducted by the College Placement Council, the average offer for a non-technical undergraduate was \$6,840 and \$8,052 for a graduate with a technical background.*

The 1967 June graduate with a B.A. degree in a non-technical field will be able to command an average of about \$49 more per month than was offered to the 1966 graduate.† Median salaries of all workers for the blind — those who have been on the job for years as well as the newcomer — are little more than the beginning salaries offered in the business world. (See Table). None of the professions listed under general business requires more than a bachelor's degree. Recent graduates entering these fields are expected to have little or no experience in their newly chosen occupations.

**College Placement Council, Salary Survey, a Study of 1965-1966
Beginning Offers Final Report, Bethlehem, Pa., June 1966 (Monthly amounts
converted to annual salaries by AFB).*

*†College Placement Council, Salary Survey, A Study of 1966-67
Beginning Offers, Report No. 1, January 1967, Bethlehem, Pa.*

Median Salaries of Workers for the Blind Compared With Beginning Salaries in Other Occupations*

Median Salary		Beginning Offers	
Rehabilitation Counselor	\$7,080	Engineering, Mechanical	\$8,040
Mobility Instructor	6,910	Physics, Chemistry & Math	6,850
Social Worker	6,320	General Business	
Rehabilitation Teacher	5,880	(inc. Management)	6,850
		Accounting	7,020
		Marketing & Distribution	6,588
		Humanities & Social Science	6,564

**College Placement Council, Salary Survey, a Study of 1965-1966 Op. Cit.*

Summary

Throughout the survey one dominant fact emerged: with few exceptions, private agencies for the blind pay less than do government agencies. This holds true for all levels of workers, from elementary teachers to casework supervisors to directors of agencies. Apparently, low salaries in the top level of duty and responsibility are keeping the lid down on salary improvements throughout the non-governmental sector of the field.

Since 1961, salaries of workers for the blind have increased at a rate of a little more than five percent annually. This is a sharp drop from the rate of seven percent during the preceding five year period October 1955-May 1961. Despite general efforts to the contrary, salary improvements of the last five years are not keeping up with the previous trend.

The 1966 salary survey of workers for the blind also showed that:

- *Teachers for the blind in elementary and secondary local day schools receive almost \$2,000 more per year than their counterparts in residential schools receive.
- *In agencies for the blind, vocational rehabilitation counselors earn a median salary of \$7,080, approximately \$1,000 less than earned annually by teachers of the blind in local day schools.
- *Social caseworkers for the blind who have earned a master's degree receive median annual salaries of \$7,060; barely more than the National Association of Social Workers' recommendation

for beginning workers with an M.A. in social work.

* Rehabilitation teachers (home teachers) continue to receive the lowest salary of any worker for the blind (\$5,880), except certain categories of teachers in schools for the blind.

* On the supervisory level salaries in the field of education are substantially ahead of those in vocational rehabilitation work and social work.

* Directors in non-government agencies, top personnel.

In work for the blind, are paid on the average of \$2,500 less each year than their counterparts in government agencies.

Where will future workers for the blind come from? How can they be attracted to this specialized field which even now is undergoing a critical labor shortage in common with a host of allied fields? Part of the answer is to be found in paying adequate salaries. Workers for the blind must be paid at a level at least competitive with salaries of those involved in other "helping" professions. For the career worker there must be assurance of a salary plan that will keep pace with the steadily rising cost of living and which will offer an incentive as recognition of the valuable skills of mature and experienced workers.

The American people through tax supported programs and voluntary gifts have made clear their readiness to assist blind persons to overcome the disabilities that blindness imposes. If this generous support is to be translated into meaningful and constructive service it will require first class personnel who can be secured and retained only by paying realistic salaries.